



**EDGEWISE**  
ENVIRONMENTAL

# **Protected Species Observer (PSO)**

## **Course Syllabus**

## **COURSE SYLLABUS: PROTECTED SPECIES OBSERVER**

**Instructor:** TBD  
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### **Course Description:**

The course shall focus on mitigation processes of offshore aspects that may impact marine mammals and sea turtles in the Gulf of Mexico and aligns with the NMFS and BOEM criteria for Protected Species Observer certification.

### **Course Objectives:**

By the end of the course trainees should be able to:

- ✔ Identify marine wildlife and accurately assess their range and movements
- ✔ Identify various marine wildlife behaviour
- ✔ Describe potential acoustic sensitivities of marine mammals
- ✔ Understand and interpret the “Endangered Species Act” (ESA) and the “Marine Mammal Protection Act” (MMPA)
- ✔ Fill out various recording pro forma and create daily, weekly and final reports
- ✔ Communicate and implement the mitigation measures of seismic acquisition activities in the Gulf of Mexico
- ✔ Understand various offshore oil and gas activities in which PSO’s would be required and have the ability to communicate this rationale

### **Learning Outcomes:**

The course includes the following learning outcomes:

- ✔ Overview of the MMPA and the ESA as they relate to seismic acquisition and protection of marine mammals and sea turtles in the Gulf of Mexico;
- ✔ Overview of seismic acquisition operations in the Gulf of Mexico;
- ✔ Overview of seismic mitigation measures and the protected species observer program in the Gulf of Mexico;
- ✔ Discussion of the role and responsibilities of the protected species observer in the Gulf of Mexico;
- ✔ Identification of Gulf of Mexico marine mammals and sea turtles;
- ✔ Cues and search methods for locating marine mammals;
- ✔ Data collection and reporting requirements.

**Pre-Requisites:**

Registrants are required to have completed a previous Marine Mammal Observer certification as well as have completed 12+ weeks of documented and dedicated marine mammal observation. Proof shall be required before being accepted to the course.

**Course Material:**

All course material will be provided. This includes all presentation material and various supplemental documents.

**Required Course Reading:**

BEFORE ATTENDING it is required that all trainees have reviewed:

- ✦ The “Endangered Species Act”
- ✦ The “Marine Mammal Protection Act”

It is also highly recommended that trainees have familiarized themselves with general Gulf of Mexico species knowledge before attending.

**Required Items:**

It is expected that all trainees will have access to the following items during the course:

- ✦ A laptop with a stable internet connection
- ✦ Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel

**Schedule:**

The course will be conducted online. Links to course material will be provided by your instructor. A weekly meeting will be organized for review and quiz purposes. Trainees will be expected to complete 2 modules per week. Quizzes shall be conducted throughout the course, at your own pace as well as with the instructor during your weekly meetings. A schedule shall be provided once registered for the course.

**Grading Scheme and Evaluation:**

Module Exams:           50%

Final Exam:             50%

Trainees require a minimum of 60% to pass the course.

## **Certification:**

In compliance with BOEM and NMFS regulation, trainees that complete this course will have their credentials and certification sent to the regulatory authorities for review.

## **Identification Guide Recommendations**

- 1) National Audubon Society Guide to Marine Mammals of the World  
Authors: National Audubon Society, Pieter Folkens (Illustrator)  
Publisher: Knopf (April 2002)  
Amazon.ca: <https://www.amazon.ca/National-Audubon-Society-Marine-Mammals/dp/0375411410>
- 2) Smithsonian Handbooks Whales Dolphins and Porpoises  
Author: Mark Carwardine  
Publisher: DK ADULT (2002)  
Amazon.ca: <https://www.amazon.ca/Smithsonian-Handbooks-Whales-Dolphins-Porpoises/dp/0789489902>  
Chapters: <https://www.chapters.indigo.ca/en-ca/books/handbooks-whales-dolphins-the-clearerest/9780789489906-item.html>
- 3) Whales, Dolphins, and Other Marine Mammals of the World  
Authors: Hadoram Shirihaï (Author), Brett Jarrett (Illustrator)  
Publisher: Princeton University Press (Oct. 2006)  
Amazon.ca: <https://www.amazon.ca/Whales-Dolphins-Other-Marine-Mammals/dp/0691127573>
- 4) Guide to Marine Mammals and Turtles of US Atlantic Gulf of Mexico  
Authors: Kate Wynne  
Publisher: Alaska Sea Grant, University of Alaska Fairbanks (1999)  
<https://seagrant.uaf.edu/bookstore/pubs/MAB-50.html>
- 5) Our Sea Turtles: A Practical Guide for the Atlantic and Gulf, from Canada to Mexico  
Blair and Dawn Witherington  
Publisher: Pineapple Press; Illustrated edition (April 2015)  
Amazon.ca: <https://www.amazon.ca/Our-Sea-Turtles-Practical-Atlantic/dp/1561647365>